

who by sheer force of character have swayed for a time the destinies of their people. But such exceptions are rare and their effects transitory ; they do not affect the truth of the general rule that human society has been governed in the past and, human nature remaining the same, is likely to be governed in the future, mainly by masculine force and masculine intelligence.

Thus while To this rule the Khasis, with their elaborate system of and ^etew mother-kin, form no exception. For among them, while islanders landed property is both transmitted through women and mother- held by two men alone, political power is transmitted indeed kin, they through women, but is held by men ; in other words, the governed Khasi tribes are, with a single exception, governed by kings, by men, not fo<sub>v</sub> QueenSt. And even in the one tribe, which is nominally women. ruled by women, the real power is delegated by the reigning queen or High Priestess to her son, her nephew, or a more distant male relation. In all the other tribes the kingship may be held by a woman only on the failure of all male heirs in the female line.<sup>1</sup> So far is mother-kin from implying mother-rule. A Khasi king inherits power in right of his mother, but he exercises it in his own. Similarly the Pelew Islanders, in spite of their system of mother-kin, are governed by chiefs, not by chieftainesses. It is true that there are chieftainesses, and that they indirectly exercise much influence; but their direct authority is limited to the affairs of women, especially to the administration of the women's clubs or associations, which

<sup>1</sup> Major P. R. T. Gurdon, *Theby* the eldest of his sisters' daughters;

*Khasis*) pp. 66-71. The rule of failing such nieces, by the eldest of the succession is as follows. A *Sicni*^ or daughters of his sisters' daughters; king, *ci* is succeeded by the eldest offailing such grand-nieces, by the eldest<sup>'</sup> his uterine brothers; failing such of the daughters of his mother's sisters; brothers, by the eldest of his sisters' and failing such first cousins, by the sons; failing such nephews, by the eldest of his female cousins on the eldest of the sons of his sisters' female side, other than first cousins, daughters; failing such grand-nephews, those nearest in degree of relationship by the eldest of the sons of his mother's having prior claim. A female *Siem* sisters ; and, failing such first cousins, would be succeeded by her eldest son, by the eldest of his male cousins on and so on" (*op. at. p. 71*). The rule the female side, 'other than first cousins, illustrates the logical precision with those nearest in degree of relationship which the system of mother-kin, is having prior claim. If there were no carried out by these people even when heirs male, as above, he would be sued - the intention is actually to exclude ceded by the eldest of his uterine women from power, sisters ; in the absence of such sisters.,